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May 21, 2026

Antonio Jaimes, Esq.
Chief Legal Officer
Laura E. Roth, Clerk of the Circuit Court
Seventh Circuit, Volusia County, Florida

Sent via Email: *ajaimes@Clerk.org*

Re: CFO's Actions

Antonio:

I wanted to share with you my concerns – from an employment-law perspective – regarding the recent actions of the CFO.

1. The CFO is at the highest levels of the organization. Her workplace and non-workplace actions will always be noticed by peers and subordinates. At her level, she should be a model citizen.

2. Her recent, public actions are not consistent with the level of professionalism that the Clerk's Office requires of all its employees, especially ones at the highest levels. Indeed, in my view, that CFO's actions have violated the organization's policies related to professionalism.

3. If she is not terminated from her position, others will perceive that she is getting a "pass" because of her status within the organization.

4. As you know, over the years, I have regularly preached the need for consistency. We have had discussions in the past about other employees who have not met professionalism standards. In those instances, I have recommended termination. This case is not any different, if not more pressing, given her status within the Clerk's office.

5. Another important issue needs to be considered. If the Clerk does not terminate her, I am concerned about a potential negligent-retention claim in the event the CFO engages in similar behavior in the future against a fellow employee or a third party. Under the law, an employer can be found liable under a negligent-retention theory if it knew or should have known that the employee in question could engage in tortious behavior leading to injury. Here, it is clear that the CFO assaulted a fellow commissioner, irrespective of whether the State Attorney presses criminal charges. I am concerned about the Clerk's Office's exposure, given these facts.

For these reasons, I am recommending the termination of the CFO.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss further.

Very truly yours,

/s/ *Carlos J. Burruezo, Esq.*

Carlos J. Burruezo, Esq.
Shareholder

LAURA E. ROTH
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT - VOLUSIA COUNTY
P.O. BOX 6043 DELAND, FLORIDA 32721-6043 - WWW.CLERK.ORG

May 21, 2026

Dori Howington
Chief Financial Officer
[redacted]

Pre-Disciplinary Notice

Mrs. Howington:

The Volusia County Clerk of the Circuit Court ("Clerk") has become aware of violations of the Clerk's Policy Manual ("Policy Manual"). You received and acknowledged the Policy Manual when you were hired. When determining the proper discipline for an employee, Policy 501 states that the Clerk may consider the severity of events, the frequency of problems of similar nature, and the conduct or performance issues affecting the organization. Due to the severity of events that have arisen during your tenure with the Clerk's office, disciplinary action is being considered, up to and including termination of your employment.

On May 6, 2026, a Facebook post and a video posted in the public Facebook group "Deltona, Debary, Orange City & Beyond-Local News, Politics & Commentary," alleged that you confronted Commissioner Emma Santiago inside City Hall. The video depicts a loud verbal confrontation between you and Commissioner Santiago, during which you followed Commissioner Santiago into an office and placed your hand on her upper left shoulder. Commissioner Santiago stated, "Don't touch me." There are also allegations that before, during, or following the confrontation, you stated, "I know where you live," and "I'm coming for that bitch," referring to Commissioner Santiago.

This confrontation appears to have stemmed from the May 4, 2026 Deltona City Commission meeting, where the Commission voted to request an opinion from the Florida Commission on Ethics regarding whether a conflict of interest existed between your duties as a City Commissioner and your position as Chief Financial Officer for the Clerk of Court. Commissioner Santiago moved for the ethics opinion based on an audit that referenced your dual roles. Although the audit reportedly noted that no material transactions occurred between the two agencies, it recommended disclosure of related parties for awareness in the event material conflicts arose in the future. During the same meeting, the Commission also voted to remove you from Team Volusia, the county's economic development organization, though you had already resigned, following allegations concerning a Facebook post attributed to you and its impact on

your involvement with the organization. *See* Deltona TV, *Regular Commission Meeting – May 04, 2026*, YouTube (May 4, 2026), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRajARlqQwU. (Containing discussion regarding the audit, potential conflict-of-interest concerns, and discussions of matters related to Team Volusia).

Allegedly, as a result of the alleged confrontation and unwanted physical contact, and alleged statements, Commissioner Santiago contacted law enforcement. A law enforcement complaint alleging Battery and threats against a public servant has been submitted and is currently with the State Attorney's Office awaiting a determination as to whether criminal charges will be filed.

Upon learning of these events and the related public reports, the Clerk's Office placed you on administrative leave with pay pending an internal investigation pursuant to Policy 501. Policy 501(4) prohibits "[o]n or off the job conduct which adversely affects the efficient operation of the Office's business." Your conduct, as depicted in the video and described in supporting reports, adversely affected the Clerk's Office operations by negatively impacting employee morale, and damaging employee confidence in leadership stability.

Your conduct also appears to have violated Policy 102, Ethics/Standard of Conduct. Policy 102 requires employees to demonstrate high ideals of honor and integrity, exercise sound judgment, and exhibit a professional attitude. As Chief Financial Officer, you hold a senior leadership position and are expected to model professionalism, restraint, sound judgment, and respect. The conduct shown in the video does not meet those standards.

The public nature of this incident has also affected the Clerk's Office beyond the confrontation captured in the video. Employees from different departments have described your conduct as unprofessional and inconsistent with the standards expected of the Clerk's leadership and expressed embarrassment or concern for the reputation of the Clerk's Office. Because the video was posted publicly and involved your conduct as a public official while you also serve as the Clerk's Chief Financial Officer, the incident has raised concerns about your judgment, professionalism, and ability to continue serving in a senior leadership role.

The Accounting department, which you oversee and help supervise, has also been affected. Some Accounting department employees have expressed disbelief and concern after learning about the video and the allegations surrounding the incident. The reports and conduct depicted in the video have caused concern about whether similar confrontational behavior could occur in the workplace, particularly because you serve in upper management and exercise authority over employees in that department and the overall organization. This has disrupted trust, morale, and confidence within the department that you lead and the organization.

Your administrative leave has also created operational difficulties. As Chief Financial Officer, you perform and oversee critical financial functions for the Clerk. Because of your absence, other members of the accounting team, management, and leadership have had to determine how to handle essential duties that you normally perform or oversee. This has placed additional stress on employees, disrupted normal workflows, and required the Clerk to reassign responsibilities and seek help from third party professionals to maintain continuity in financial operations.

As the Chief Financial Officer, your conduct surrounding the May 6, 2026 confrontation demonstrated poor judgment and behavior inconsistent with the professionalism, respect, and leadership standards expected by the Clerk's office. Such behaviors have caused difficulties for your coworkers, management, and the public. Quite simply, your actions fall short of our organization's expectations. As outlined in Policy 104, all staff members are expected to uphold the organization's fundamental values of teamwork, professionalism, and respect. Given the critical importance of your position and the high standards expected of a CFO, your actions were unacceptable.

According to the Policy Manual, you may submit a written appeal of any disciplinary decision to the Clerk. The decision of the Clerk will be conclusive and obligatory.

Human Resources

COPY

LAURA E. ROTH
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT - VOLUSIA COUNTY
P.O. BOX 6043 DELAND, FLORIDA 32721-6043 - WWW.CLERK.ORG

Dori Howington
[redacted]

May 21, 2026

Mrs. Howington:

This letter serves as notification that your employment with the Clerk of the Circuit Court is terminated end of business day May 21, 2026. Your termination is based on violation of Clerk polices as described on the attached Pre-Disciplinary Notice dated May 21, 2026.

Below are important details regarding financial and benefit information that you need to know. Please know: (if applicable)

- You will be paid for all hours worked up to May 21, 2026 (if applicable).
- Remaining PTO (if applicable) for which you are eligible to be paid and processed on your final paycheck
- If you have any FRS questions, please contact FRS through their guideline number 866-446-9377.
- If you have a Nationwide account, please contact our representative, Jeff Szak, at (407) 223-9466.
- If you have a Health Savings Account, those funds belong to you. We will, however, no longer pay the monthly fees after separation of employment (visit Optum bank online www.optumbank.com or call the phone number on the back of the card.)
- Your W-2 will be mailed to the address above unless you notify us differently.
- Should you require a reference check, please have the organization contact HumanResources@clerk.org or 386-822-5753.

If you elected medical, dental, and vision with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, it will end on **May 31, 2026.** You will receive information from our COBRA provider should you wish to continue your health, dental, or vision benefits. You are also encouraged to seek benefit quotes from www.healthcare.gov and the Health Care Marketplace to review your options for coverage there.

If you wish to convert your supplemental life insurance, please contact USAble at 1-855-207-2008 or by email at membershipandbilling@usablelife.com to make arrangements. The attached conversion form must be submitted to USAble as soon as possible, as this is **time-sensitive**.

If you have any questions regarding your benefits, contact our HR department at 386-822-5753 or email humaresouces@clerk.org. We wish you the best.

Best Regards,

Laura E Roth

Laura E. Roth
Clerk of the Circuit Court

Cc: Personnel File